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CIA Said to Doubt Soviet Tie to Terrorism

Associated Press

A draft report prepared by the CIA "strongly disagrees" with Reagan administration contentions that the Soviet Union is a key supporter of international terrorism, government sources said yesterday.

The sources, who asked not to be identified, said the CIA conclusion is contained in a draft of a national intelligence survey being circulated on Capitol Hill and within the administration.

"It strongly disagrees with Reagan's and [Secretary of State Alexander M.] Haig's contention that the Soviets are behind international terrorism," a source said.

The survey also includes assessments prepared by the Pentagon and the State Department, according to the sources.

"The Defense Intelligence Agency concludes that the Soviets are in it [support for international terrorism] up to their necks," one source said.

"There is no smoking gun. And since you don't have that, no, the Soviets aren't behind international terrorism," is the way one source summarized the CIA's findings.

The sources said CIA admits there is "circumstantial evidence" of Soviet involvement in terrorist activities, but insufficient "credible evidence."

"The [CIA] conclusion is a highly political one," one source said.

The sources declined to say exactly what data the CIA relied on, noting that much of it included classified secrets.

The assessments are contained in a report known as a National Intelligence Estimate. The final report is not expected to be made public.

The CIA is the primary agency responsible for preparing the intelligence estimate.

Haig said on Jan. 28 in his first news conference that even though the Soviets have been the targets of terrorist activities, "they today are involved in conscious policies which foster, support and expand" international terrorism.

"I think it is clear that we have an unprecedented, at least in character and scope, risk-taking mode on the part of the Soviet Union not just in this hemisphere, but in Africa as well," the secretary of state said.

Haig ordered a review of administration efforts to combat international terrorism.